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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT  
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**DRAFT**

# **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

## **CHARLESTON HARBOR POST 45 EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL BENEFICIAL USE ALTERNATIVES**

**Charleston County, SC**

**October 2016**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District (Corps) to evaluate the effect of proposed projects on both the environment and human health and welfare. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) summarizes the results of the Corps' evaluation and documents the Corps' conclusions from the supporting Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA).

In July 2015, the Corps released the Final Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (IFR/EIS) for the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Study that described the Recommended Plan (RP) for navigation improvements to Charleston Harbor.

The Final IFR/EIS identified several items for further evaluation during PED phase, one of those being a commitment to evaluate additional beneficial use alternatives for the new work dredged material. Consistent with the Final IFR/EIS, the Draft Supplemental EA provides the PED phase evaluation of beneficial uses of dredged material for the new work material dredged from the channel. The alternatives evaluated in detail within the report were all identified in the IFR/EIS as options that would receive additional analysis or development during the PED phase. The Draft Supplemental EA also includes the process and results of fine-tuning the locations of artificial reefs (previously evaluated during the Feasibility Phase in the Final IFR/EIS) near the entrance channel, and of identifying any existing approved reefs that could be supplemented with rock material from the channel.

The Corps evaluated the feasibility of over 15 alternatives. Many of these were eliminated from further evaluation due to economic, engineering, or environmental constraints. Along with disclosing the locations for the construction of artificial reefs with dredged material, the Corps proposed the following additional beneficial use options which are further defined within Section 7 of the Draft Supplemental EA:

- (1) Augmenting Crab Bank within Charleston Harbor to create and protect bird nesting habitat using up to 1.2 million cubic yards of predominantly sandy dredged material from the navigation channel;
- (2) Augmenting Shutes Folly within Charleston Harbor to create and protect bird nesting habitat using up to approximately 300,000 cubic yards of predominantly sandy dredged material from the navigation channel; and
- (3) Beach placement along a portion of Morris Island at the south end of the Charleston Harbor inlet to protect dry beach habitat and eliminate flanking of the landward terminal end of the southern jetty to Charleston Harbor.

The Corps has adequately described the affected environment and evaluated the environmental effects of the potential beneficial use options. Pursuant to NEPA, the EA describes the affected environment and evaluates new information pertinent to the proposed locations for beneficial use options. Its purpose is to discuss and analyze the potential environmental effects resulting from the construction of the proposed beneficial use options.

The Corps' criteria for evaluating the effect of both the no action alternative and the proposed beneficial use options are fully described within the Draft Supplemental EA. The Corps has determined that the proposed options do not constitute an action significantly affecting both the environment and human health and welfare. Similarly, the proposed options do not represent either a substantial change to the RP or present significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns. The proposed options will measurably benefit the Charleston Harbor system by providing much needed bird habitat and sand to eroding islands. Accordingly, preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted. The Draft Supplemental EA can be downloaded at <http://www.sac.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Charleston-Harbor-Post-45/>, or a copy may be obtained by contacting Mr. Mark Messersmith ([mark.j.messersmith@usace.army.mil](mailto:mark.j.messersmith@usace.army.mil)); (843) 329-8162).

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